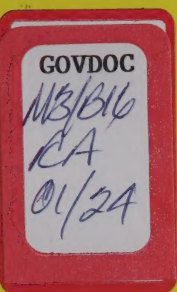


Boston Redevelopment Authority  
**POLICY ON MITIGATION**



Frequently  
Asked Questions  
about Boston's  
approach to  
balancing large-scale  
development  
and its  
impacts.



# **IAGs & You!**

Impact Advisory Groups



## **What is an Impact Advisory Group?**

When large-scale development happens in a neighborhood, the neighborhood can change. The City recognizes that changes can have both positive and negative effects on the surrounding community. In order to balance out these effects, the City requires developers to "mitigate those impacts" by providing projects or programs that alleviate the pressures on a community. An Impact Advisory Group ("IAG") assists the BRA in determining the appropriate mitigation.

## **What is Mitigation?**

Mitigation can include physical improvements that the developer will construct on-site or in the impacted area. For instance, traffic is always a concern for neighbors. Mitigation could provide a necessary traffic study and then a new pattern of stoplights, signs, and crosswalks. A project may provide the opportunity for new lighting or sidewalks, another benefit mitigation can provide. Mitigation can also take the form of financial contributions to local organizations, such as "The Friends Of" a park or a playground. The BRA provides oversight of these funds, making sure they are spent in the ways that are approved and agreed upon.

## **Who decides what benefits qualify for mitigation?**

Mitigation is about creating a balance. To figure out that balance, mitigation is agreed upon by the developer and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, with the input of the members of the affected community.

## **How does the City approach mitigation?**

The City has outlined a clear policy for developers to follow when building in Boston. While mitigation has been a part of the Boston Zoning Code for decades, the IAG policy was developed and announced in October of 2000 to standardize prac-

tices and clarify the framework for determining mitigation. The policy sets clear and consistent guidelines for all communities and developers. If you would like to see a complete copy of the policy, you can call 617-722-4300 and request a copy be sent, faxed, or emailed to you.



## **What is the process for determining mitigation?**

As it does in all development processes governed by Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code, the BRA takes the central, coordinating role in the process of determining mitigation. The BRA listens to everyone involved and governs the agreement. Mitigation is part of the process of "Large Project Review" under Article 80, which is outlined elsewhere. The City's new policy on mitigation provides an additional step before the Article 80 process, an additional source for public input. This new piece is provided by an Impact Advisory Group.

## **Who determines the impacted area?**

The BRA is required to determine the impacted areas of development projects. Determining that area involves weighing elements such as location, size, mass, use, transportation, and existing and proposed infrastructure.

## **Why is an Impact Advisory Group appointed?**

In order to ensure that the BRA staff fully considers community concerns, the new mitigation policy allows the Mayor to create an Impact Advisory Group, or IAG, for major projects. The IAG is a group of interested individuals chosen to formally examine the impacts of a proposed project and suggest options for mitigation. A project's IAG is composed of up to nine (9) members, a majority of whom are residents, business owners, or designees of community organizations within the impacted area.





## **How are IAGs appointed?**

The Mayor appoints the IAG, drawing nominations from the project location's City Councilor, State Representative, and State Senator as well as recommendations from the at-large City Councilors. Any local Neighborhood Council will have at least one representative on the IAG.

## **How does an IAG get assembled?**

Here are the steps to the process outlined in the new policy:

- 1) The developer submits a Letter of Intent to the BRA, informing the agency that the developer intends to begin the official approval process.
- 2) Upon receipt of the Letter, the BRA solicits three (3) nominations for IAG members from the district City Councilor, State Representative, and State Senator. The BRA also seeks input from at-large City Councilors and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services.
- 3) After a period of seven (7) days, the Mayor appoints the project's IAG from assembled nominations and recommendations.
- 4) The usual Article 80 review process begins when the Developer submits the Project Notification Form ("PNF"). The developer then adheres to all Article 80 and BRA public review requirements, including a community meeting within the impacted area.
- 5) The IAG participates in the BRA's Scoping Session on the project and offers suggestions to the BRA on the project impacts and appropriate mitigation.
- 6) Prior to final execution, the BRA provides copies of the draft Cooperation Agreement to members of the IAG for review and comment.
- 7) After review of the Cooperation Agreement, the IAG dissolves.





## **What if I am not on the IAG?**

The IAG process does not restrict residents or local organizations from submitting comments during periods designated in the Article 80 process of development review.

Community meetings and comments will still play the major role in any development review process. Article 80 of the Zoning Code requires it. The IAG is an addition to the usual process.

## **Does the IAG replace the established community voices?**

The IAG does not replace or limit other community organizations. Every development project will continue to undergo the same thorough public review process that Article 80 requires. For instance, the BRA will continue to require every developer to hold publicly advertised meetings for feedback from local residents. Every neighborhood or community organization will still have the option to comment officially on a project during the public review periods. Many projects will require public hearings before the BRA Board as well as other boards or commissions.

All the established steps are still in place. The IAG simply represents a cross-section of individuals to provide greater public insight to the BRA in weighing mitigation. The IAG provides a vital perspective clarifying the balances we must strike as the process of change continues in Boston.

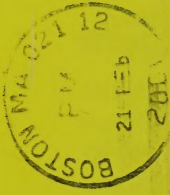
**If you have further questions about a project or the IAG associated with that project, please contact the Boston Redevelopment Authority at 617-722-4300.**



City of Boston  
Thomas M. Menino, *Mayor*



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